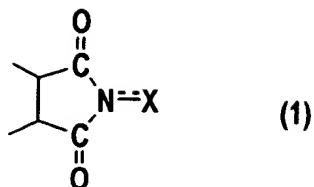


B¹



wherein X represents an oxygen atom, a hydroxyl group or an acyloxy group, thereby forming a reaction mixture, and subsequently

separating said reaction product and said imide compound from said reaction mixture by:

(A1) solvent-crystallizing the imide compound from said reaction mixture with at least one solvent selected from the group consisting of a hydrocarbon, a chain ether and water, or

(A2) cooling-crystallizing the reaction product from said reaction mixture by cooling, or

(B) distributing the reaction product into a phase of a water-insoluble solvent and distributing the imide compound into a phase of an aqueous solvent, respectively, by using an aqueous solvent containing at least water and a water-insoluble solvent separable from the aqueous solvent.

B²

18. (amended) The process of claim 1, wherein the imide compound is an oxidation catalyst for oxidizing the substrate, and the reaction product is an oxidation reaction product corresponding to the substrate.

B³

16. (amended) The process of claim 1, wherein the reaction is conducted in the presence of a solvent, and the reaction mixture is subjected to a condensation step to separate the solvent in advance of separation of the reaction product and the imide compound.

B3
2. (amended) The process of claim 1, wherein separation of said reaction product is by solvent-crystallization step (A1), in which the hydrocarbon is an aliphatic hydrocarbon having 4 to 16 carbon atoms or an alicyclic hydrocarbon having 4 to 16 carbon atoms, and the chain ether is a diC₁₋₆alkyl ether or a C₁₋₆alkyl C₆₋₁₀aryl ether.

3. (amended) The process of claim 2, wherein the imide compound is an aromatic imide compound, and the reaction product is an oxidation reaction product of an alicyclic hydrocarbon or an alicyclic alcohol and is soluble in the solvent for crystallization in the solvent-crystallization step (A1).

4. (amended) The process of claim 1, wherein separation of said reaction product is by cooling-crystallization step (A2), and a solvent which is a poor solvent for the reaction product and is a good solvent for the imide compound is used as a reaction solvent in the cooling-crystallization step (A2).

5. (amended) The process of claim 4, wherein a C₁₋₄carboxylic acid, a C₁₋₁₀alcohol or a water-containing solvent is used as a reaction solvent in the cooling-crystallization step (A2).

6. (amended) The process of claim 4, wherein the reaction product is an oxidation reaction product of an alicyclic hydrocarbon or a methyl group-containing aromatic compound in the cooling-crystallization step (A2).

7. (amended) The process of claim 4, wherein the imide compound is an aromatic imide compound and the reaction product is an aliphatic carboxylic acid having 6 or more carbon atoms or an aromatic carboxylic acid in the cooling-crystallization step (A2).

8. (amended) The process of claim 1, wherein separation of said reaction product is by extraction step (B), and wherein the aqueous solvent is water.

9. (amended) The process of claim 8, wherein, in the extraction step (B), the aqueous solvent contains a base.

10. (amended) The process of claim 8, wherein in the extraction step (B), the reaction mixture is subjected to hydrolysis treatment in advance of separation of the reaction product and the imide compound.

11. (amended) The process of claim 10, wherein the reaction mixture is hydrolyzed by using an aqueous solvent containing a base.

12. (amended) The process of claim 8, wherein, in the extraction step (B), the water-insoluble solvent is at least one member selected from the group consisting of a hydrocarbon and an ether.

13. (amended) The process of claim 8, wherein the water-insoluble solvent is used as a reaction solvent in the extraction step (B).

14. (amended) The process of claim 8, wherein the reaction product is an oxidation reaction product of an alicyclic hydrocarbon, or an aromatic hydrocarbon having a methyl or methylene group, and is water-insoluble in the extraction step (B).

15. (amended) The process of claim 8, wherein the reaction product is a cyclic alcohol, a cyclic ketone, an aldehyde having a cyclic hydrocarbon group or a carboxylic acid having a cyclic hydrocarbon group in the extraction step (B).